

DEER PARK BROADCASTER

Car burglars don't take vacation or days off



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With the Holiday season approaching, it is important to consider just how easy a target your vehicle may be for would-be car burglars. Beyond the obvious acts of leaving cars unlocked and unattended overnight, or leaving your car running as you run into the convenience store, day care center, or post office, motorists typically increase their time shopping, travelling, and visiting with family and friends during the Holiday season. However, it is important to remember that car burglars never take a break.

Few crimes affect such a wide range of people as an event where their vehicle is burglarized or intentionally damaged. In order to aid the La Porte Police in the prevention of such crimes, and help each resident enjoy a stress-free season, please follow these **four simple steps** which have been shown nationwide to be effective means of motor vehicle burglary deterrence.

1. **Park your vehicle in a secure location.** Studies conducted both regionally and nation-wide have shown vehicles parked in the street have a 120% higher chance of burglary. Additionally, while percentages for parking in a driveway are not as favorable as in a garage, vehicles parked in a driveway also have a reduced chance of break-in when compared to those parked curbside. LPPD advises that the best way to combat motor vehicle burglaries is to utilize proven deterrents of all residential crime: keeping hedges trimmed, removing low hanging tree branches, installing outdoor lighting, and utilizing locking devices.
2. **Lock any unoccupied vehicles.** City-wide, an overwhelming percentage of reported burglaries involve unlocked vehicles. Certain individual neighborhood percentages have been shown to reach as high as 90-100% of vehicles being unlocked. In fact, since 2014 began, around 58% of the Burglary of Motor Vehicle events throughout the entire City of La Porte have involved unlocked vehicles. Not only do unlocked vehicle make easier targets for criminals, but once inside a vehicle, burglars often choose small, easy to carry, electronic items which typically do not have serial numbers recorded and can also be sold for a quick profit. Purses, GPS units, stereo equipment, laptops, cell phones, and loose change are items particularly sought after. Simply recording model and/or serial numbers, and removing any valuables from plain sight, can deter criminals and enable the police to track items.

3. **Remove valuables.** While locking doors is a major deterrent of theft, a determined thief who can see your valuables simply by looking through a window may go the extra mile to enter your vehicle. Equally important, if you have a GPS device, stereo system, or other illuminated piece of technology, be aware that glowing items serve as a beacon for thieves as they walk or drive along residential neighborhoods. Also, whether going from store to store, parking at restaurants, or visiting friends throughout the day, the holiday season is a time when Christmas gifts are often left in plain view. Therefore, if you cannot take gifts or valuables inside with you, place such items in your trunk or hide them under a blanket.
4. **Report suspicious people walking around neighborhoods as soon as possible.** Reporting suspicious people to the police helps track movements and patterns of criminals which may also link them to other crimes. Sadly, analysis nationwide has revealed that only half of vehicle burglaries are ever reported; leaving an uphill battle for police in combating such a trend. However, armed with knowledge of such events, and community assistance, your police department can continue their primary mission of fighting crime.

To report suspicious activity, please contact the La Porte Police Department at 281-471-2141. Or if you wish to speak with a crime prevention specialist, call 281-842-3183 or 281-842-3174.